

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 41

By Berke

A RESOLUTION to recognize Reverend Marvin Thomas Billingsley on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those individuals who have answered a divine call to the ministry and who have served with devotion, strength, and revelation to perform God's work for their congregations and their communities; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Marvin Thomas Billingsley is one such stalwart servant of the Lord, who has served with anointing grace since 1975 as the pastor of Greater Tucker Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee; this humble man of God has now taken a much deserved retirement; and

WHEREAS, a gifted preacher, Reverend Billingsley delivered his final sermon on Sunday, January 16, 2011, and now holds the title of Pastor Emeritus; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Billingsley and his devoted wife, Pearl L. Billingsley, have rendered fifty-two years of sterling service to the ministry of God; and

WHEREAS, born in Bakewell, Tennessee, on March 14, 1936, Reverend Billingsley accepted the rewarding call to the ministry in September 1958, and became licensed to the Gospel ministry in August 1959. In April 1960, this remarkable leader was ordained to the Gospel ministry at New Monumental Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his faithful service at Greater Tucker Baptist Church, Reverend Billingsley served as pastor to Mount Zion Baptist Church in Dayton, Tennessee and also as the minister for New Enon Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee; his forty-six years of blessed pastoral service includes a four year involvement in mission and evangelism

ministry, and he has authored and published two written works, *Facts for your Faith* and *Are You Ready to be Ordained*; and

WHEREAS, utterly dedicated to education and religious understanding, Brother Billingsley has attained many academic achievements during his inspirational life: he holds a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in Theology from International Seminary in Plymouth, Florida, and he has obtained numerous certificates in a broad range of subjects, including *Religion and Society in the Black Experience* from Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville, Tennessee, and *Psalms Song of Praises* and *To Every Creature* from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois; and

WHEREAS, he graduated from Booker T. Washington School in 1953, at a time when African Americans were discriminated against in public education; as a man of strength and great resolve, Reverend Billingsley went on to graduate from the A.B.T. Seminary Extension in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and in 1967 he received an Associate of Science degree from Chattanooga City College; and

WHEREAS, a committed activist for the Civil Rights Movement, Reverend Marvin Billingsley was a leader in the struggle to rename East Ninth Street in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in the honor of the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, defined by a strong dedication to equality for all people, Mr. Billingsley served on the Human Rights and Human Relations Commission; and

WHEREAS, among his many accolades, Reverend Billingsley was given the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities in December 2004 from the International Seminary in Plymouth, Florida, where he currently serves as an adjunct professor, supervisor, and representative; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Billingsley also serves as the Director of the Unity Theological Center, Coordinator of the Eastside Downtown Fellowship of Churches, Founder and Director of the Unity Mission Center, Inc., and Founder of the Church Consulting Service; and

WHEREAS, this valiant servant of God is presently a member of the Tri-State Baptist Conference, New Monumental Baptist Church, the Tennessee B.M.E. State Convention, the Chattanooga Hamilton County B.M.&E. District Association, the Clergy Koinonia of Chattanooga, the Unity Group, and the National Baptist Convention U.S.A., Inc; and

WHEREAS, a man of immense accomplishment, he has been a member of Good Neighbors, Inc., the Knoxville Black Church study forum, and the Task Force on School Reconfiguration. Reverend Billingsley has written sermon material for the National Institute of Christian Education, and by trade was a shoe cobbler and leather craftsman; and

WHEREAS, his many personal and professional achievements aside, Reverend Marvin Billingsley is most appreciative of the love and companionship he shares with his wife, Pearl L. Billingsley; his daughter, Mrs. Priscilla E. McGhee; and his grandchildren, Adrian and Camille Davis, all of whom he is very proud; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career as a religious leader, a Civil Rights activist, a community organizer and leader, and foremost as a humble servant of God, Reverend Marvin Thomas Billingsley has demonstrated the utmost compassion, ability and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his friends, his family, and his congregation at Greater Tucker Baptist Church; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and recognize Reverend Marvin Thomas Billingsley on the occasion from his retirement from the ministry, and extend our best wishes for his continued success and happiness in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.